

Message Text

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67

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9009

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION NATO

USIA WASHDC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 11327

E.O. LL652 N/A

TAGS PFOR, FR

SUBJECT: BRANDT'S DEPARTURE AND THE FRENCH PRESS

SUMMARY: THREE GENERAL IDEAS HAVE BEEN ADVANCED BY FRENCH COMMENTATORS IN THE PAST 48 HOURS ON BRANDT RESIGNATION: (1) THAT OSTPOLITIK, THOUGH IT MAY BE MODIFIED BY HIS SUCCESSORS, IS PERMANENT; (2) THAT LIKELY SUCCESSOR SCHMIDT IS MORE ATLANTIC-MINDED AND COOLER TO EUROPE THAN BRANDT, WITH CONSEQUENT NEGATIVE IMPACT ON EC; AND (3) THAT BRANDT'S ACTION IN INTEREST OF COUNTRY AND PARTY CONTRASTS WITH POSITION OF PRESIDENT NIXON. IN ADDITION, FIGARO POINTED OUT THURSDAY THAT SOME PARIS PAPERS ARE EXPLOITING BRANDT RESIGNATION IN

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FRENCH PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN. END SUMMARY.

1. "HIS MASTER WORK, OSTPOLITK, AND THE TREATIES WHICH CROWNED IT", SAID A LE MONDE EDITORIAL TUESDAY EVENING, "APPEAR IRREVERSIBLE. HIS SUCCESSOR, AND EVEN THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC CHANCELLOR WHO SUCCEEDS HIM LATER ON, WILL HAVE TO MAKE OSTPOLITIK THE BASIS OF THEIR FOREIGN POLICIES". THE NEWSPAPER THOUGHT BONN'S EXTERNAL POLICY WOULD, HOWEVER, BE ALTERED IN SOME RESPECTS "MR. SCHMIDT DOES NOT HIDE THE FACT THAT HE IS, IN PRINCIPLE, SYMPATHETIC TO AMERICAN AND ATLANTIC POSITIONS, AS WAS SEEN IN THE WASHINGTON CONFERENCE LAST FEBRUARY. HE WILL PROBABLY BE MORE RIGID TOWARD THE EAST AND WON'T HESITATE TO OPPOSE CONCEPTS TRADITIONALLY DEFENDED BY FRANCE IN THE MATTER OF EUROPEAN CONSTRUCTION."

2. FIGARO'S NEW DIRECTOR, JEAN D'ORMESSON, TOOK LATTER POINT FURTHER, ASSERTING THAT MOST "DRAMATIC" ASPECT OF BRANDT'S RESIGNATION IS THE "NEW BLOW IT GIVES TO THE SLOW, PAINFUL MAKING OF EUROPE". CHIEF EDITOR PHILIPPE TESSON OF QUOTIDIEN DE PARIS (PARIS' NEW LEFTIST, INDEPENDENT DAILY) ASKED "WHOSE SUPPORT EUROPE CAN COUNT ON NOW?" AND ADDED: "IT CERTAINLY ISN'T MR. SCHMIDT WHO WILL EXERCISE HIMSELF TO REKINDLE THE FLAME. HE HAS OTHER IDEAS IN MIND. EUROPE IS WAITING NOW FOR THE KNOCKOUT BLOW. BRANDT'S SUCCESSOR IS NOT THE MAN TO PAY THE PRICE NECESSARY TO AVOID IT."

3. FRANCE SOIR AGREED WITH ITS COLLEAGUES' ASSESSMENT OF SCHMIDT. "THE FUTURE CHANCELLOR IS AN OUT-AND-OUT PROPONENT OF A CLOSE ALLIANCE BETWEEN (BONN) AND THE U.S.", WROTE STEPHANE ROUSSEL. "HE CANNOT CONCEIVE OF A EUROPE CONSTRUCTED AGAINST AMERICA OR WITHOUT AMERICA. HIS ATLANTICIST ATTITUDE AT THE RECENT WASHINGTON ENERGY CONFERENCE AROUSED THE HOSTILITY OF MR. JOBERT, WHO POINTED OUT THE 'CUSTOMARY RUDENESS' OF THE GERMAN MINISTER'S REMARKS". ROUSSEL WROTE THAT HE HAD THEN ASKED SCHMIDT WHAT HE THOUGHT OF JOBERT'S REPROACH. "MR. JOBERT CAN SPEAK OF MY RUDENESS, IT DOESN'T EMBARRASS ME", SCHMIDT IS QUOTED AS REPLYING. "I AM SURPRISED

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THAT HE CALLED IT CUSTOMARY. MR. JOBERT DOES NOT KNOW ME. IF YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT PEOPLE THINK OF ME, ASK MR. GISCARD D'ESTAING OR MR. MICHEL DEBRE. THEY ARE THE FRIENDS I HAVE IN FRANCE."

4. IN VIEWING THE DEVELOPMENTS IN BONN, SOME WRITERS HAD REFERENCE TO SITUATION OF PRESIDENT NIXON. THUS LES ECHOS NOTED THAT "THE WHITE HOUSE SPOKESMAN SAID

YESTERDAY THAT BRANDT'S RESIGNATION CANNOT BE COMPARED
WITH PRESIDENT NIXON'S POLITICAL SITUATION. HE WAS
ANSWERING THE REACTION OF MANY AMERICANS TEMPTED TO SEE
BRANDT'S RESIGNATION AS AN EXAMPLE OF WHAT A
STATESMAN INVOLVED IN A SCANDAL SHOULD DO. THE MOVEMENT
FOR IMPEACHING THE PRESIDENT IS THUS LIKELY TO GAIN
MOMENTUM..."

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5. IN SIMILAR VEIN, LE MONDE CORRESPONDENT HENRI PIERRE
IN WASHINGTON REPORTED THAT THE "IMMEDIATE REACTION OF

OBSERVERS AND POLITICAL CIRCLES WAS OBVIOUSLY TO DRAW A PARALLEL BETWEEN THE ATTITUDE OF BRANDT AND THAT OF PRESIDENT NIXON. 'WHAT AN EXAMPLE AND WHAT A LESSON', SAY ALL THOSE WHO HAVE LONG WANTED THE PRESIDENT TO RESIGN IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE COUNTRY". PIERRE WENT ON TO RECORD THAT OFFICIAL WASHINGTON "PRIVATELY DEPLORES" DEPARTURE OF MAN CONSIDERED AS "THE MOST RESPONSIBLE EUROPEAN PARTNER", THE "REASONABLE LEADER OF EUROPE" WHO MAINTAINED "PRIORITY UNCLASSIFIED

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TRANSATLANTIC TIES" AND WHOSE OSTPOLITIK WAS VIEWED AS A "GUARANTEE FOR THE DETENTE POLICY PURSUED BY NIXON AND KISSINGER." PIERRE ADDED THAT WASHINGTON'S "PROFOUND REGRET" OVER BRANDT IS "SOMEWHAT ALLEVIATED" BY PROSPECT THAT SCHMIDT WILL SUCCEED HIM. WHILE WASHINGTON EXPECTS SCHMIDT WILL KEEP BONN IN THE ALLIANCE AND BE LESS HESITANT IN OPPOSING POSSIBLE PRESSURES FROM FRANCE TO LEAD EUROPE IN ANOTHER DIRECTION, SAID PIERRE, THE AMERICANS ARE LESS CERTAIN THAT SCHMIDT IS AS DETERMINED AS HIS PREDECESSOR TO MAINTAIN AND ENLARGE RAPPROCHEMENT WITH EASTERN EUROPE. "WITHOUT SAYING IT TOO OPENLY", HE WROTE, "IT IS FEARED THAT BONN'S FOREIGN POLICY MIGHT TAKE A NATIONALISTIC TONE, WITH SOME ANTI-SOVIETISM, THAT MIGHT EMBARRASS WASHINGTON."

6. IMPACT OF BRANDT RESIGNATION ON FRENCH PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION WAS EVOKED THURSDAY BY FIGARO, WHICH CITED A NUMBER OF ARTICLES IN OTHER PARIS PAPERS THAT, SAID FIGARO, ARE EXPLOITING BRANDT DEPARTURE AND GUILLAUME AFFAIR. FIGARO SUPPLIED QUOTES FROM VARIOUS ARTICLES TO ILLUSTRATE AS FOLLOWS. RIGHTIST AURORE: "THE PICTURE OF WILLY BRANDT FORCED TO LEAVE THE CHANCELLORSHIP BECAUSE HE BELIEVED HE COULD HAVE CONFIDENCE IN THE COMMUNISTS OF HIS COUNTRY IS SUFFICIENTLY MEANINGFUL THAT WE NEEDN'T STRESS EVERYTHING THAT THIS PUTS INTO QUESTION TODAY IN FRANCE AT THE TIME OF A DECISIVE CHOICE." GAULLIST LA NATION: "THIS IS THE FIRST TIME IN THE LIGHT OF DAY THAT WE SEE THE METHOD OF POLITICAL INFILTRATION PRACTICED BY COMMUNIST AGENTS WITHIN A SOCIALIST TEAM...MR. MITTERRAND AND THOSE WHO INTEND TO VOTE FOR HIM SHOULD FIND MATERIAL FOR REFLECTION." REVOLUTIONARY QUOTIDIEN ROUGE: "WILLY BRANDT'S RESIGNATION IS PART OF THE GENERAL CRISIS OF LEADERSHIP OF BOURGEOIS EUROPE WHICH NOW EXTENDS TO GERMANY". COMMUNIST HUMANITE: "AFTER THE ELECTORAL REVERSES SUSTAINED BY THE (SPD) IN A SERIES OF PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS, WEST GERMAN REACTIONARIES FELT THE MOMENT OPPORTUNE TO ORCHESTRATE AS MUCH NOISE AS POSSIBLE AROUND THE GUILLAUME AFFAIR. THE OBJECTIVE OF ALL

THIS AGITATION IS OBVIOUS -- TO PUT THE POLICY OF
DETENTE IN QUESTION."
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